Dent. A.

A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

A very godly and profitable Sermon, preached at *Lee* in *Essex*,

By ARTHVR DENT, Minister of Gods Word.

Published at the request of sundry godly, and well disposed Persons.

Ionah. 2. 8.

They that wait upon lying vanities, forsake their owne mercies.

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In Concionem *Arthuri Dent*, *G. Pudei* Carmen.

MAture resipisce precor, peccataq; linque:
Qui legis, aut audis, quisquis es, istud opus.
Si nova peccatis peccata prioribus addes,
Olim hæc te contra Concio testis erit.
Hæc aliqui lecta flentes sua crimina multum,
Mutarunt mores, & nova vita placet.

The same in English.

THou that dost reade or heare this worke,
I wish thee to doe this:
Repent in time, and sinne forsake,
Amend what is amisse.
But if thou wilt adde sinne to sinne,
Not minding to amend,
This Sermon shall a witnesse be,
Against thee in the end.
Some that have heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their sinne,
Have chang'd their former manners, and
A new life now begin.

Fiat ultra impressio,
Novemb. 28. 1637. *Samuel Baker.*

To the Reader.

ALthough I was moſt unwilling that this poore talent and travell of mine ſhould ever have beene broached abroad, and come to light, both becauſe it may ſeeme as a candle lighted at noone-day, as alſo, becauſe many other mens doing might more worthily a great deale have beene publiſhed and committed unto letters; yet becauſe divers which heard it preached with a lively voyce, were very inſtant, yea, and more than importunate with me to have it publiſhed, uſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gaine-ſay, I did at laſt yeeld to their requeſts: and ſo this untimely fruit is come abroad

to be ſold in open markets. Let no man therefore bee offended, that I have not ſtrained my ſelfe to flie an high pitch, to ſome out the froth of mans wiſedome, and to make a great ſhew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanity, till it burſt with ſwelling; but it is not my uſe; I ſeeke eſpecially the ſalvation of the ſimple and ignorant: and therefore ſtoope downe to their reach and capacity. Therefore I beſeech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: reade this without prejudice; like it as thou profiteſt, ſo ſhalt thou have praiſe of God, and comfort in thy Conſcience.

A

A SERMON of Repentance.

LUKE 13. 5.

I tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

The occasion of these words of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices, that is, murthered them as they were sacrificing, and so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. These men therefore, thought that those Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they had suffered such things: and that those eighteen also, upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, were sinners above all the men that dwelt in Ierusalem. Wherin they did utter a secret corruption naturally ingendred in all men: that is, very sharply to see into the sins of others, severely to censure of them, but in the meanewhile to

flatter themselues, and to be blinde-fold in seeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought, because the like iudgements did not fall vpon them, therefore they were well enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God, according as many doe falsely suppose, that they are alwaies the worst sort of people whom God doth most strike and presse with his punishing hand: hauing forgotten that God doth not keepe an ordinary rate here below, to punish euery man as hee is worst, or to fauour or cocker him as hee is best: but onely taketh some examples, as hee thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisements of all others, and to be, as it were, looking-glasses wherin euery man may see his owne face: yea, and his owne cause handled; and that God is a seuere reuenger of sinne: that all men may learne by the example of some, to tremble, and beware, lest, peraduenture, they be worthily constrained to keepe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these newes to our Sauiour Christ, had taken forth this lesson: whereupon our Sauiour is iustly occasioned to correct their erroneous and sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishment of others, but rather be instructed thereby to repent.

And further, to signifie that God doth not alwaies most punish the most notorious offenders, as murtherers, theeues, robbers, whoremongers, blasphemers, quarrellers, scoffers, and such like: But reserueth them vnto the iudgement of the great day, and, as it were, casteth them against the day of slaughter, and therefore hée answereth them negatiuely, and saith, No, or not so, but except yee repent, yee shall all likewise perish. As if hée should say, Are yée all of this opinion indéed, that onely monstrous sinners are punished in this world, and others let alone? Or that the Galileans, and those eightéene upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, were greater sinners than all others? Or doe you thinke, because the same Iudgements haue not light vpon you, therefore you shall steale away in the darke, and escape the iudgements of God? No, na, you are deceiued: For I say vnto you, that except you mourne and lament for your sinnes, and fall to some agréement with God in time, you (I say, euen you, which are so ready to condemne others, and iustifie your selues) shall not onely perish with the like iudgements in this present world, but be euerlastingly condemned in the world to come. So that our Sauiour in so saying, doth thunder downe a most dreadfull sentence vpon all our heads: For hé concludeth and setteth downe

that

that all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poore, young or old, noble or vnnoble, learned or vnlearned, simple or politick, of what state, degree, and condition soeuer they be; liuing and dying without repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell-fire for euer. The Scriptures are full of such thunderbolts, Ioh. 3. 18. He that believes not is damned already. And, 2 Cor. 13. 5. Prove your selves, whether you are in the Faith: Examine your selves: know you not your selves, that Iesus Christ is in you, except yee be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their heart by faith, which is the housholdsister of Repentance, are no better than reprobates, cast awaies, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dates are grossely deceiued in Repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hindrances: and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent: therefore I haue a present intent to teach, first, what is Repentance: secondly, which be her qualities and effects: thirdly, when we should repent: fourthly, wherefore we should repent: and last of all, what letteth vs from Repentance. Which order and me-

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thod of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I have in hand, I thinke it not inconvenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing and continuall mourning of the heart and conscience for sinne, joyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words and works from evill to good. This repentance no doubt, was in David, who when he was covertly reproved by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes laid before his eyes, did not stubbornely defend them, and so inflie against God: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them over, but cryeth out in the bitternesse of heart, I have sinned, and thereupon made the 51 Psalme; a Psalme indeed full of dolour and heavinesse: wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults, lamenteth his sins, and prayeth even for a new heart, and a new spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new promises of amendment of life: so that in David we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe (as the Books of Psalmes doth every where declare, which layeth him out, as it were in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward and outward sinnes. Here therefore behold what is Repentance.

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Likewise Saint Peter through infirmity having denyed his Lord and Maker Christ, and being pinched of his owne conscience, and wakened with the alarme of a poore Cockes crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate, with a heavy heart weeping bitterly, and ever after stoutly professing Christ euen unto the death. See then what is Repentance. The Prophets, in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes unto Repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifies, Turne ye, or Repent yee, and come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed farre out of his way, must returne quite backe againe the contrary way: So those that haue strayed from the way of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as ever they went forward, and altogether change the course of their life: So that repentance is an earnest turning unto God, with all your heart, soule, and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the New Testament, exhorting unto Repentance, vse the Greeke word, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after-wit: So that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulfe of sinne, when they come unto themselues, and haue recouered their wits,

will

will be wise afterward, and take heed they neuer come there againe, according to the Prouerbe: The burnt childe will take heede of the fire. By this time, I hope you see what is Repentance: It is not euery sorrow, but sorrow for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sinne: not for an houre; but for euer: Not for a day; but continually, Not for a weeke; but as long as we liue. Some thinke euery sorrow is Repentance, but so should Worldlings repent. Some thinke euery little pang for sinne is Repentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some thinke all weeping and lamenting for sinne is Repentance, so should Esau, Iudas, and Cain repent. Some thinke euery little humbling of our selues is repentance, but so should Ahab repent. Some thinke that good workes, and good purposes are Repentance, but so should euery sicke man repent. Some thinke that a reformation of words and deeds are Repentance, but so should ciuill men repent. Some thinke that to cry God mercy is Repentance, and so should euery fole repent. You see therefore how many are deceiued in Repentance. But if you will see what it is indeed, looke backe to that which hath beene said before: for hee that will repent in good earnest, must not hang downe his head like a Bulrush for a day onely, and so hang downe: Nor cry from the teeth outward,

Lord

Lord have mercy upon me, and so away; but hee must make a backe reckoning, with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Prophet David, Psalm 119. 59. I have considered my waies, and turned my feete unto thy Testimonies. So must every one that meaneth to repent, slinke aside into some corner or out-place, that there hee may have roome enough to beate his owne conscience, and to make his heart smart for his sinnes, by aggravation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the ninth of Daniel: The Church of God confesseth her sinnes, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping up one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I have sinned: but to say, I have most traiterously sinned, I have most obstinately, carelesly, and rebelliously sinned: I have monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such a company, on such a day, in such a corner, in the darke I committed Adultery closely, when I thought none had seene mee, in such a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife, mine owne conscience doth accuse mee of it: in such and such a company I have beene drunke, I have spoken and railed against Gods Word. I have mocked the Preachers, I have spared no oathes nor filthy speech: and now (O Lord) Lord, what an ugly monster

and

and wretched villaine am I? Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blind, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, having deserued a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter into Iudgement, and try the Law with mee. Therefore I beseech thee to shew pity and compassion vpon mée. Annoint my wounds with the oyle of mercy, restore mée my sight, cloath my nakednesse, enrich mée that am poore, strengthen mée that am weake, helpe mée that am fallen: O bid me not farewell. The infant ouer-commeth his mother with crying, the childe his father with weeping, and the seruant his Master by intreaty, and wilt thou not be intreated, O Lord? Thus, I say, if euery man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly, or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly hée were in the way to Repentance.

But alas, it is a world to see how the blind Buzzards, and crooked Canker-wormes of this world, goe awrie from this rule, deceiuing themselues with the bare title and naked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can talke of it, but few walke in it: many speake of it, but few féele it: many describe it, but few know it. It is hid and locked vp from the World, and reuealed onely vnto Gods Children: many thinke they haue caught it, when

when they haue but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it: It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it: So wide, that few can comprehend it: So slippery, that few can hold it: So secret, that few can finde it: therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueale vnto vs this Mysterie which is hid from the world, that wee may see it, and know it, finde it, and feele it to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus, which grace he grant vs.

But now, to the second point, concerning the qualities and fruits of Repentance: one especiall quality of Repentance is alwaies to bring with it Remission of sinnes: For where true Repentance goeth before, there Remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after: Not that Repentance deserueth Remission of sinnes, but because where God worketh Repentance, there hee pardoneth sinnes, because of his promise, as in Ezech. 18 17. When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that hee hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule alive. And againe, Isaiah 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his waies, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord, and hee will haue mercy vpon him. So here wee see to whom

whom forgiveneſſe of ſinnes, and the mercie of God belongeth: namely, to the penitent ſinners, to thoſe that leave ſinne, and embrace godlineſſe, to thoſe that forſake their owne wayes and imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord. And as for ſuch as walke in their owne wayes, and follow the delights of ſin, without any ſorrow or purpoſe to leave them, they have nothing to doe with the mercie of God: and though Jeſus Chriſt had ſuffered a thouſand deaths (which could not be) yet ſhall no impenitent ſinner have remiſſion of his ſins by his death, nor any other benefite of his paſſion: for they belong onely to his Church and choſen people here vpon earth. He therefore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Chriſt by faith, hee that is not a member of his myſticall body, can enioy nothing by Chriſts death: If any man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and withereth, and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they burne, Ioh. 15. 16. We read in the 29. of Deut. how God barreth all ſtubborne ſinners from his mercy, and dothmoſt terribly ſhoot out againſt them. Hee that heareth the words of this curſe, and bleſſeth himſelfe in his heart, ſaying; I ſhall have peace, although I walke according to the ſtubbornneſſe of mine owne heart, thus adding drunkenneſſe to thirſt: the Lord will not be mercifull vnto him, but then the wrath of

the Lord, and his iealousie shall smoake against that man, and every curse that is written in this booke, shall light vpon him. So that God sayth plainly, he hath no mercie for such as walke in vaine delights of sin, and in the stubbornesse of their owne hearts, adding drunkennesse to thirst: that is, ioyning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blinde wormes of the world deceiue themselues. For they thinke, whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent, or not repent, yet they shall be saued by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sins, and so worke that villany against Christ; I hope to bee saued by Christs death as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercy is common to all? and Christs death a bawd for thy sins? No, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt hop short. For it will proue far otherwise. For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into iustice, and Christs death into wormwood, because thou hatedst knowledge, and chosedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see, my deere brethren, that repentance must needs goe before forgiuenesse of sinne, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp: and this is the first

quality

quality of repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the minde. For whosoever hath truly repented, you shall by and by see a most marvellous and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not doe as he hath done, nor speake as he hath spoken, nor company as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to doe, nor runne the same excesse of ryot as he was wont. And this is that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle and foam at the mouth like wilde Bores, and to speake evill of them that turne unto God: For the world loveth his owne, and cannot abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings; but repentance doth violently pull men out of the clawes of Satan, and change them from the condition of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble; of hurtfull, harmelesse; of cruell, meeke; of wolues, lambs; of lyons sheepe; of adulterers, chast liuers; of drunkards, sober men; of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, friends; of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, louers: of earthly, heauenly: Diuels, Saints: all these worketh repentance. Paul trauelled towards Damascus a Wolfe, a Persecutor, a Blood-sucker, a Ha-

ter, a Despiser, but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and cleane of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. When Jesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost vpon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Ierusalem, which mocked, and sayd, They are full of new wine: But the same men cryed out by and by after; Men and brethren, what shall we doe to be saved?

Here was a most wonderfull and sudden change: See then the force of repentance when God striketh it into the heart of a man, and driveth the nayle to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisedome and policie of man is not able to bring to passe: and when they have prouled hither and thither, and layd their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to convert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger than all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe devices, cannot compasse: for the conversion of a sinner is a worke supernaturall. Here then we have a glasse to behold our selves in, whether ever wee have repented, or no: for if we finde not this change and alteration in vs, wee have not repented, and so consequently remaine vn-

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der damnation. Therefore let euery man looke vnto himselfe: for marke how much he is changed and altered from his former wicked wayes, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man he was three, foure, eight, nay thirty yéeres agoe, surely, surely, he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I marvell then how these men, which never felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose Conscience telleth them that they are not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can haue hope of saluation? vnlesse peraduenture they beléeue not this doctrine, or thinke it to be false. I will send ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they now are, and yet thought they might doe well enough for all that, although both blinde in iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne and doe know men, which before their conuersion and inward change, were counted as honest men as euer brake bread, and as substantiall men as any could be, and as true dealers, vpright liuers, good house keepers, as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too: and yet notwithstanding when they haue felt repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirit, at the preaching of the Word: and when they haue had new hearts

given them to discerne better, and new eyes to see better, as men come out of a dampe, have wondered and marvelled at the palpable and grosse darknesse they were in before, and have burst forth into these words, that they would not be in the same case they were before, no not for all the worlds goods: for if they had dyed in that case, they were sure they should have beene damned. But I pray you what case were they in before? were they not good honest men, and well accounted of, and honest livers, and well taken wheresoever they came? surely they were so taken in the world; but now they thinke farre otherwise of themselves, their eyes being opened, and their iudgements inlightned: for now they see what they saw not before: now they understand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. Me thinketh this example should make civill and worldly men feare and suspect themselves, and know their owne miserie before God. For those men were as good as they before their conversion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottome of hell, and drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare: and he that hath eyes to see, let him see: for if men will still soth themselves for all this, that they shall bee saved, without feeling any change or works of repentance, it will cost

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them full deare in the end. For Christs words will prove true, that whosoever repenteth not, shall bee damned; that is, whosoever doth not feele in himselfe what is repentance, and finde in himselfe the qualities thereof, shall bee condemned: for where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance; and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ sayth, Except yee repent, yee shall all perish, it is all one as if he had sayd, except you know the truth of repentance, except you can prove vnto your consciences the forgiveneſſe of your sins, except you feele a change and alteration in the bottoms of your hearts for all your former lewd wayes & misdemeanours, you shall surely perish and bee damned. But let vs a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the 7. chap. of the 2. Epistle to the Corinthians, setteth downe seven notable qualities and effects of repentance.

The first of them he nameth Care: For behold (sayth he) this thing, that you have beene godlily sorry, what care it hath wrought in you? this is an earneſt study, and as it were a taking thought to please God: for where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I say) to live in the obedience of God: care to keepe a good conscience, care to reforme our households, care to in-

ſtruct our wiues, childzen, and ſeruants in the knowledge of God, care to pzay with them morning and euening: and generally, care to perfozme all duties belonging to God: So that Repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let no man thinke therefoze, that although they welter in careleſneſſe of the fleſh, and ſleepe in ſecuritie all the dayes of their life, yet their repentance is good enough: yea, and though they ſpend whole dayes, nights, months, and yeares in vanities, playes, & paſtime in idleneſſe, fond delights, pleaſures & voluptuouſneſſe, in negligence of all duty, fozgetfulneſſe of God, & contempt of all good things: yet foz all this they repent foz their ſinne, and hope to be ſaued as well as any other. But alas, how can theſe things ſtand together, to repent foz ſinne, and to delight in ſin, to hate ſin, and to loue ſin; to fly from ſin, and to follow after ſin? But theſe men I perceiue, would faine make S. Paul a lyar: foz hee ſayth, A man hath never repented, except hee bee carefull afterward to pleaſe God: they ſay, they doe repent, and haue repented, although they liue neuer ſo wzetchedly and careleſly. But when all licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whozemongers, beaſtly belly-gods, and careleſſe caitiffes, come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men come alſo with them, to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

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The next quality and effect of repentance is named, Clearing of our selves, that is, discharging of our selues when sinne doth accuse vs, and lay things to our charge: for when sin and Satan doe terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner, by and by he flyeth vnto God, and asketh forgiuenesse through Jesus Christ, so clearing himselfe, and making his apology against sinne and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court vpon suspition of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnesse, of that which is laid to his charge, so the conscience that is cited by Satan before the iustice and iudgement-seat of God, cleareth it selfe by repentance, and asketh forgiuenesse through Jesus Christ. So that here wee may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sinne, it cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God, and so haue peace with it selfe. For this is to be noted in a godly man, that when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeles lead within him, and is all heavie, and cannot sleepe quietly till he haue gotten into some corner, where hee may mourn and lament to the full, & confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, and so cleare himselfe through Jesus Christ, his conscience bearing him witnesse that his sin is forgiuen. Where-

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as contrariwise the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder foot: and by and by calleth for a paire of Cards or Tables, or some merry companion, to driue away time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head: and so indeed hee increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rankle inwardly.

The third qualitie is called Indignation: that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sinne, as when a man doth shudder and shake, and as it were grinde his teeth at the remembrance of his sinnes: For this is alwayes in the penitent person, to loath and abhorre all sinne from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of others, and to hate it as the Diuell himselfe, which is the author of it: and to flye from it, as from the very cut-throat and hangman of his soule, and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth and hardeneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, whersoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is Feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him: For the penitent person feareth alwayes,

wayes, and being priuie to his owne infirmitie and weaknesse (when God never so little withdrawetb his grace, and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with feare and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sinne, or flatter himselfe in the mercie of God, and the things that hee hath already tasted of God, to yeeld to some little sin, thinking hee may doe that, and bee the childe of God well enough, because some of Gods children haue falne into greater: but rather hee trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afrayd of the temptation which Satan trappeth in the way, and is afrayd when the tempations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne: but rather hee fighteth against sinne, when sinne fighteth against him, and preferreth the feare of God before his eyes (as godly Ioseph in the assaults of Potiphars wife) to be, as it were, a tower of defence, and well-spring of life to auoid the snares of death.

The fifth thing is Desire, that is, hungring and thirsting after righteousnesse. For the penitent man is rauished with a desire of good things: he desireth to be euery day better than other, he desireth to leaue euery day some sinne, he desireth to pray, he desireth new knowledge, and new vnderstanding of heauenly things. He desireth to heare Sermons, and will straine him-

himselfe to heare them. He desireth the company of the godly, thinking himselfe in heauen, when he is among them. He desireth the saluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires are in a penitent man.

The first quality is Zeale, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue, and hatred of vice, so that the penitent person is zealous of euery good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honour should be impeached, or his name blaspheмed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reproue the wicked, and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company, that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked among the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weathercocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man, I say, is not of that stampe: but he is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might winne a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will re-

fuse

fuse it: for he hath learned from Christs mouth, that it shall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his owne soule.

The last thing is Revenge, that is, the penitent person is so offended with the sinne hee hath committed, that hee will bee revenged of himselfe for it. As for example, if hee have offended in gluttony, hee will revenge himselfe by fasting two or three dayes after. If he have offended in whoredome, hee will bee revenged of his lusts by haltering and brideling of them ever after. If hee have offended in covetous catching and polling of other mens goods, hee will bee revenged of himselfe by restitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus: and this indeed is a speciall fruit of Repentance, to reforme our selves in those things wherein wee have most offended. Now then wee see (my deare brethren) what lyeth in the belly of Repentance, and which bee her inwards: so that we must needes now come to the unlacing and unbowelling of Christs words: Except yee repent (sayth hee) yee shall all perish: that is, except yee have this forenamed Care, you shall all be damned: except yee have this clearing of your selves, you shall bee damned: except you have this Indignation, you shall bee damned: except you have this Feare, you shall bee damned: except you have this Desire, you shall all be damned: except you have this Zeale, you shall

shall all be damned: except you haue this Reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speake of the bare name of repentance, but of repentance with her furniture and appurtenances: so that whosoeuer hath not repentance with all her qualities and effects, or at least, some measure of them, hee hath no repentance indeed, and therefore shall be damned: For except you repent, ye shall all perish. But me thinketh that I heare some men say, Here is nothing but damnation, damnation: you preach nothing but the Law, let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren, I protest vnto you, that I speake in loue whatsoeuer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all. If I could winne but two of all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God hath greatly blessed my labours. And vndoubtedly, if I knew any neerer way to bring you to God, then by preaching the Law, to make you know your selues, surely, surely, I would vse it: Or if I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell, & mercy, would doe you more good, you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy, Mercy. But alas, I see that euery careless and ignorant man presumeth vpon Gods mercy. I see that euery filthy liuer, and notorious blasphemer abuseth Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe without

repen-

repentance, so that they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I see that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell preached, which indéede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornnesse: But onely to the penitent sinner which forsaketh himselfe, and groneth and panteth vnder the burthen of his sinne. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and groane and pant vnder the burthen of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the Law. But I pray you, wil you steale, murder, and commit adultery, and yet heare of mercy? Will you mocke, sweare, blaspheme, and raile, and yet heare of mercy? Will you serue sinne, hate vertue: and follow your owne lusts, and yet heare of mercy? Would you haue plaisters before you haue wounds? Would you haue physicke before you be sicke? Would you be let blood before you haue need?

Would you not account him a foolish Physitian, that will minister Physicke to a whole man? Would you not thinke him an vnskilfull Chirurgian that will apply a gentle saine to an old festered sore, and not rather corrosiue? Then know you, my brethren, that because you

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are full of grosse humours, you must have strong purgation, because you are full of old festered wounds, you must have corrosive salves: for that is best for you, and the speediest way to recover your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must have a rough rider, and a hard knotty timber must have hard wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Law, to drive you to Christ: we preach iudgement, to make you to seeke mercie: we preach damnation, to bring you to salvation. But to preach mercie and forgivenesse before men see their sins, or know their misery by the preaching of the Law, is to preach the Gospell unprofitably: For hee that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what misery is in himselfe, or what mercie is in God.

What father is there, who if his childe should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in everie thing hee commandeth, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy? and not rather severely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What master will commend his servant for doing what hee list, and not what hee commandeth him? Even so we may not disobey and do evill, and looke to be flattered for, and not rather chidden. Let us know then, that though God useth searing, lancing, or corsing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the meane while hee procureth our health by them.

them. And let vs further vnderstand, that forasmuch as there is no other meanes to draw vs to saluation, but by the cleansing of all our vices, and the same cleansing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Law, so as our owne consciences accuse vs, although we like well to be now and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs seeke to bee spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs, and to bee made ashamed of them, & to haue our dishonesty discouered, and not desire to bee pleased. For it were the next way to make vs rot in our owne filthinesse, if we should hold it in secret: and it would cost too deare the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heauenly Iudge thunder downe vpon vs.

Therefore when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to bee rebuked, as meet is, and let him vnderstand that it is for his profit that hee is not soothed. And if hee haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himselfe else, that hee is fore-closed, so shall he neuer receiue the doctrine to his profit and instruction: and let him bee content to haue his Sores rubbed and bewrayed, that hee may be brought to that which is for his welfare. If any man please a sicke body, what shall become of him? Shall hee giue him drinke euery minute of an

houre? Shall hee giue him wine, whereas hee should giue him water? shall hée giue him sallets? it were the next way to poyson him. To be short, it is certaine that a man doth alwayes séeke his owne death, when he would haue men to seeth him. But now, which is better, either that hée which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yéeld to all his desires, or that he should bridle him, notwithstanding that hee chafe and gnash his téeth, because hee may not haue his will in his desires? You sée therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter and rayse up men with the preaching of Mercie, before they haue been cast downe with the sence of Gods iudgement. Cease therefore to open your mouth, to make hue and cry ouer the Countrey, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation; unlesse you will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisedome, because he preacheth and cryeth out, that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth, and iudgement to whom iudgement appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and be content to be ruled by the wisedome of God. But now let us proceed to the third generall point, which is the time when we

shall

shall repeat. The holy Ghost in the Scriptures poynteth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentance: Joel 2. 12. Therefore also now the Lord sayth: Turne you vnto me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. Likewise, in the 3. to the Hebrewes: Exhort one another, whilst it is called to day, lest any of you bee hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same Chapter: To day if yee will heare his voyce, harden not your hearts as in the provocation. So that now, even now is the time of repentance.

Now while he calleth, now whilest hee speaketh, now whilest he knocketh; let vs now therefore heare, let vs now therefore obey, let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue forerunned so many dayes, which haue so long hardened our hearts, which haue let so many good things runne out and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although wee could neuer bee moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turn vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked wayes, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and begin

anew againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take counsell there how to doe, how to behave my selfe in every action, I will not only reforme my selfe, but also my whole household, wife, children, and servants, according vnto the same. Thus, my deare brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay: and be not like to Epicures & slack graces, which say, Youth will bee youthfull, and youth will have a course, and what should wee make it so holy when we are young? tush, there needs but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be merry now, wee shall never be younger: wee will repent when wee are old. As if (poore soules) they had repentance in their sleeves, and at their commandement, and that they could repent when they list. No, no, these fellowes shall pay for their presumption: For God will give them over to hardnesse of heart and impenitencie, because they tooke so much vpon them, and made so long delayes, that in the meane season they might enioy the profites and pleasures of sinne. Therefore (good brethren) let vs not put it off from day to day, but let vs now seeke the Lord whilest hee may bee found, and call vpon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while time is, for time and tide tarrieth for no man: Let vs know this to bee the time of our visitation. Our Saviour Christ wept over Ierusalem,

because

because they knew not the time of their visitation. Hee reproved the Iewes, because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we wil not know this to be the day of mercie, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisedome crieth out in the streets. Therefore now while we haue the light, let vs walke like children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall bee too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deere Christians, let vs remember the five foolish Virgins, which because they over slowed the time, had heaven gates barred vp against them. Let vs all remember the fearefull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in hell torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, and could not have it. An hundred thousand times therefore better it is for vs, to leave our sinnes now, to mourne for them now, and now to repent, than hereafter (alas) when it shall be too late: better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leave our sinnes, and to make our hearts smart for them, than to be condemned for euer, and to cry in the bottome of hell: Wee haue wearied our

selues in the way of wickednesse and destruction, and we haue gone through dangerous wayes, but wee haue not knowne the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? Or what profit hath the pompe of riches brought vs? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a Post that passed by. Wee haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach: We fooles thought their life madnesse, and their end with dishonor: but lo, they are counted amongst the children of God, and their portion is amongst the Saints: Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not bee worse than the fowles of the aire: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the time of their comming: the Husband-man taketh his time, the Mariner watcheth his tides: Therefore let vs also take the time, and turne to the Lord whilst it is called to day: Which grace God grant vs. Now let vs returne to the fourth poynt, concerning the causes which may moue vs vnto repentance. Herein I haue obserued nine speciall things.

First, The great mercie of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, as Rom. 9. The bountifulnesse of God leadeth vs unto repentance, sayth the Apostle: God doth continually follow vs with his mercies and benefites, both concerning our

soules

soules and bodies, we haue no good thing which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue of him, and to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercie towards our bodies, and euery mercie & benefit either towards soule or body, calleth vs to repentance: he giueth vs meat, drinke, and cloathing, these call vs to repentance: hee keepeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sunne, the Moone, and the Starres call vs vnto repentance: the birds of the ayre, the fishes of the sea, and the fruits of the earth, cry out vpon vs, both loud and shrill, Repent, repent: all creatures moue vs vnto repentance. Our Creation calleth vs, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election moueth vs to repentance; What could God doe more for his Vineyard that he hath not done? Therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, The Iudgements of God moue vs vnto repentance; For all the thunder-bolts, Plagues and Punishments which God hath throwne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the World, are so many Warning pieces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the dead sleepe of sin, and to pricke vs to repentance. As in 1. Cor. 10. When the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of God against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, hee concludeth;

Now all these things came vnto them for examples, and were written to admonish vs vpon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgements wee reade of in the Scriptures, are so many Admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw vs to repentance. All the iudgements wee reade of, doe see, and heare of every day, knock with maine strokes, beat downe right vpon our consciences, to repentance. The vgly monsters, strange births, and fiery Constellations, vnknown Comets, sudden Deaths, marvellous Droughts, vnwonted Snowes, horrible Inundations, forraine wonders, strange apparitions, threatnings of heaven above, with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the Earth vnder our feet, and our houses over our heads, as of late dayes. What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beames and Cable-ropes to draw vs to the Lord by repentance?

Thirdly, The word of God helpeth vs to repentance: For as God in the old time sent his Prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to repentance; so hee sendeth abroad the Preachers and Messengers in these dayes to sound vp the Trumpet of his Word, and to ring the sweet Bells of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth

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their voyce: But surely this is the last remedy that God hath appointed; and if this will not move vs to repentance, if this will not cure vs, then are we altogether vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes wee have committed, ought to bee so many spurres in our sides to pricke vs to repentance. It is sufficient (saith S. Peter) that wee have spent the time of our life after the lusts of the Gentiles, walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse, gluttony, drinkings, and all abominable idolatries. Now therefore it is time to repent. Oh that men would looke backe to themselues, as they were forty, thirty, twenty, or ten yeeres agoe! Oh that they would call to minde their open and secret sinnes, and me thinketh it should make their hearts bleed within their bellies to thinke vpon them: Oh that they would consider how much time they haue misspent, and how many other things they haue neglected, and altogether omitted.

Fiftly, The shortnesse of our life calleth earnestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life is sixty yeeres and ten, and if they liue to eighty yeeres, yet is his strength but labour and sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and wee flie away, saith the Prophet David: we haue spent our yeeres as a thought, therefore hee addeth, Teach vs to number our dayes, that wee may apply

Dent, A.

apply our hearts to wisedome. Our life for the shortnesse and inconstancie of it, in the Scriptures, is compared to Grasse, to a Vapour, to Smoake, to a Weauers Shuttle, which glideth away swiftly. Euen so the dayes of men passe away, no man knoweth how. Man is of a short continuance (sayth Iob) and full of trouble. Experience teacheth vs, that to day a man, to morrow none. Hence away, we must all, here is no abiding place for vs: how soon we know not. Therefore let vs repent.

Sirtly, the small number of those which shall be saved, ought to thrust vs forward to repentance. Strive to enter in at the narrow gate: for many (I say vnto you) will seeke to enter in, and shall not be able, sayth Christ, Luke 13.24. And in another place he sayth, The gate is strait, and the way narrow that leadeth vnto life, and few there be that finde it. If men would consider of this, it would make them look better about them, and try with themselues whether they be of that small number or no.

Seuenthly, Death threatens vs, which is very terrible to the flesh, and the remembrance of it very bitter to a man that is souled and soked in the pleasure of this World. It flattereth no man, it regardeth no person, it weigheth no friendship, it careth not for rewards, it is very grim, vgly, and cruell, and killeth downe-right where

where it hitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, The day of Iudgement, and second appearing of the Son of Man. He will come as a theefe in the night, in the which the heavens shall passe away with a noyse, and the Elements shall melt with heat, and the earth with the Workes that are therein, shall be burnt vp. Seeing therefore that all these things must bee dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conversation and godlinesse? sayth S. Peter, 2. 3. The Lord Iesus shall shew himselfe from Heaven with his mightie Angels in flaming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them that know not God, and obey not the Gospell of our Lord Iesus Christ, sayth the Apostle, 1. Thessal. 1. I saw (saith Iohn, Rev. 20.) a great white Throne, and one that sate on it, from whose face fled away both the earth and the heaven, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead, both great and small, stand before God, and the bookes were opened, and another booke was opened, which is the Booke of life, and the dead were iudged of those things which were written in the bookes, according to their workes; and the sea gave vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuered up their dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to his workes.

In these places wee see both the suddennesse, the

Dent, A.

the fearefulnes and glory of Christs comming.

For hee shall not come poore and contemptuously, as in the first visitation, but he shall come very princely, royally, and triumphantly to the great terrour of his enemies, when a consuming fire shall goe before him, and ten thousand thousands of Angells wayt upon him: at what time the Kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chiefe Captains, and the mighty men, & euery bond-man, and euery free-man shall hide themselues in dennes, and among the rockes of mountaines, and say to the rockes and mountaines, Fall on vs, and hide vs from the presence of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the lambe; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? Revel.6 Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is Hell torments, than the which nothing is more intollerable. Therefore saith Christ, Matth.9. If thine hand cause thee to offend, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands, to goe into hell, into the fire that never shall bee quenched, where the worme dyeth not, and the fire neuer goeth out. The Scripture speaketh terribly to our senses concerning the estate of the damned persons, calling it hell fire, damnation, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone for euer. In the thirtyeth Chapter of the Pro-

Prophesie of Esay, it is called Tophet, and is even prepared of old, it is even prepared for the King, hee hath made it deepe and large, the burning thereof is fire and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a River of brimstone doth kindle it. These speeches are terrible in themselves, and very marvellously amaze vs. But if I had the tongues of an hundred men, nay, of an hundred Angels, yet were I not able to utter them, as some (one day) shall feele them, much lesse were you able to conceive them. If all the tortures and cruell torments that can be devised by the wit of man, were executed upon some one, yet were it nothing to this. Wee poore wretches thinke there is no paine to a Cholick, or a cruell ague; but if all the Cholickes, Agues, and other strange diseases, could possibly light upon one man, it were but a flea-biting to that which is to come. The paine is endlesse, easelesse, and remedilesse. The dayes of their hellish torments shall never weare out, nor their yeares come to an end, the longer they continue, the lesse hope they have; when as many yeares be expired as there be men in the world, and starres in the heavens; when as many thousand yeares are ended, as there be stones and sands by the sea-shore, yet still there bee ten hundred thousand times so many more to come. Those that will not now be moved in hearing,

shall

shall then bee crushed in pieces in feeling. All Drunkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, Usurers, Extortioners, Lyars, Mockers, Contemners, Secure persons, Jolly-fellowes, Kopping Ruffians, Lustie bloods, the braue Lads of the world, and all other vnbelievers shall one day bee apprehended, and arraigned before the Barre of Gods Tribunall Seat, where the Maiestie of God shall stand above them with a naked Sword of vengeance, and a Scepter of Justice; the Devill, that old Sathan, shall stand on the one side to accuse them, and their owne consciences on the other side to condemne them, and the gasping gulfe of hell vnderneath them, ready to swallow them vp for evermore. Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall woe and damnation proceede against them, Goe yee cursed into hell fire, &c. There they shall drinke (as a iust recompence of their iniquitie) the bitter Cup of Gods eternall Wrath and Indignation in the Kingdome of Darkenesse, and in the fearfull presence of Sathan, and all the cursed enemies of Gods grace: where the dolefull Drumme of Gods anger shall ever sound through their eares, where ever shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; where shall be confusion, woe, and endlesse lamentation: their gripes shall bee so great, their groanes so deep, and their garboyles so intollerable, that they

shall

shall grinne like a dog in their infernall convulsions, and with howling and yelling cry out, woe and alas that euer I was borne: O that I had neuer beene borne, or that my mother had borne me a toad; so then my condition should haue been better than it is: cursed was the time I was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, and the day I sucked my mothers paps: cursed I was alwayes, cursed I am, and cursed I shall be euermore: Wo, wo, how great is my torment? Whose heart doth not melt? Whose eares doe not glow? Whose haire doth not stand upon his head to heare these things? Therefore (deare brethren) let vs repent. If the mercie of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgements scare vs: If his iudgements cannot scare vs, let his Word moue vs: If the Word cannot moue vs, let our sins amaze us; If our sins cannot amaze vs, let the shortnesse of our life dampe vs; If the shortnesse of our life cannot dampe vs, let the small number of those that shall be saued afray vs; If that cannot afray vs, let death terrifie vs; If death cannot terrifie vs, let the day of iudgement shake vs; If that cannot shake vs, let hell torments shudder vs, and rend vs in pieces. For verily (my brethren) if none of all these can prevaile, if wee will not for all this repent, but bee still obstinate, then wee shall all perish, and bee damned, according to

to Christs words. Now let vs proceed to speak of those things which hinder from repentance: which indeed, although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seven speciall lets and hinderances vnto repentance.

The first is Vnbeliefe: that is, when men will not believe such things which are spoken and proved vnto them out of the word of God: that is it that vomitteth vp all good things, and poysoneth the very intralls of a man, and keepeth all good graces from vs, as appeareth, Math. 13. 58. He did not many great workes there for their unbeliefe sake: and in the fourth Chapter to the Hebrewes, it is sayd: Vnto them was the Gospell preached, as also vnto vs: but the word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixt with faith in those that heard it. So that here wee may see, although wee heare never so much, yet if wee bring not faith with vs, wee shall never profit vnto repentance: for unbeliefe taketh vp our hearts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholsome doctrine of Salvation, and doth so harden men in the wayes of sinne, that in the end they become past feeling, and cannot bee touched one whit, either with the iudgements or mercie of God, but count the one as blasts of winde, and made the other a covert for their filthinesse. You shall note some men, who when they have heard

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their sinnes straightly ripped vp by the Word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without speedy and earnest repentance, will breake out into these words of vnbeliefe: If this be as hee saith, God helpe vs, I hope it is not so: I trust I shall doe well enough for all this: as long as I haue a good faith in God, and doe none no harme. Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profit for their saying? What? doe they thinke no body shall bee saued, but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare Sermons? God forbid, but those which doe not goe to heare Sermons, should be saued as well as they? why may not one serue God as well at home at his house, hauing good Bookes and good Prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare Sermons and Seruice? Alasse; these men stand too much in their owne light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For doe they thinke to bee saued by any other meanes than God hath appointed? or when God hath auouched any thing in his Word, will they except against it, and so make God a lyar? when God hath once set downe a thing, and proued it to their faces, will they yet reply, when God hath told vs, that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary meanes of our saluation, shall wee hope to bee saued, though wee contemne it, and neuer, (or very seldome) heare

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it? Is not this plaine infidelity and unbeliefe, that when God saith one thing, we will say another: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so: Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth us out from repentance.

The second let is, The presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharpely reproved for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talke covertly, saying, God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no justice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophesie doth sharply reproue: The Lord (saith hee) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked. But because I haue spoken before of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercy, I will here passe it ouer, and willing you to note it as one speciall let unto repentance.

The third hinderance is, The example of the multitude: for that doth harden and embolden men vnto sinne; as when many Birds flicker and flocke together, they fall vpon the baits without any feare; but one or two alone will be afraid; euen so the examples of many sinne-companions doe embolden men to run thorow

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the snares of Sathan, without any mistrust. Therefore it is said in Exod. 23. Thou shalt not follow a multitude to doe evill. This is the thing which hindreth a great number from God; for they never looke up unto God, or to his Word, but stare upon the common doings of most men, and examples of the world; thinking, if they doe as the most men doe, and as their fore-fathers have done before them, they are cocke-sure, and on an even ground. And thereupon ariseth their divellish Proverbe; Doe as the most men doe, and the fewest will speake ill of you. But they have forgotten Saint Pauls Rule, Rom. 12. Fashion not your selves like unto this World. These fellowes that stand upon multitudes, will reason thus: We see none of the great ones of the World, none of the Noble, none of the Rich, none of the Wise and Prudent, receive this Doctrine, but onely a few shake-ragges, and beggarly rascalls; and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for us to meddle withall. Loe, what thoughts may crepe into our heads, and how slily Satan may trumpe in our way, and blinde-fold us, and leade us away in the darke, by doting us with the example of the multitude. Therefore let us take heed of these pit-falls which Satan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with those thoughts and

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reasons. The wicked beare themselues in hand that they shall win the game, and that the gol goeth on their side, and there is nothing but crowing long before it be day, and great triumphing among them before any stroke be giuen. and that because we are but a handfull of people, and they a great multitude, and that in a manner the whole world agréeth with them to practise our death. Thus the Diuell doth cast a myst before their eyes, and closely leades them away from repentance. Therefore deere brethren, let vs stand fast in the Word of the Lord, and not be carried away, and bowed quite downe with the raging streame of the multitude, but let vs know it to be an especiall engine of Satan, whereby hée driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance is long custome of sinne, for that taketh away all sense and féeling of sinne, and maketh it, as it were, another Nature vnto vs, so that wee may as well alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus couldred vnto vs through long custome. Therefore it is said, Ier. 13. 23. Can the Blacke-moore change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also doe good that are accustomed to doe evill. There the Prophet affirmeth that it is as hard to cure an old disease, that is bred in the bones, and to remedy a sinne that hath béene hatched and brought up with vs, as

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to wash a Black-moore white, or to change the spots of a Leopard, which cannot be without destroying of nature. And surely, try it who will, he shall finde it as hard a matter to leave an old custome, whether it be of swearing, of gaming, of lying, of whoring, of evill company, or of any other sin, as to wash an Ethiopian. Therefore it is written Pro. 27. Though thou shouldest bray a foole in a morter, among wheat brayed with a pestell, yet will not his foolishnesse depart from him. So that, as long as wee are in custome with sinne, the dore of repentance is barred against us.

The 5. hinderance is, long escaping of punishment, for the wicked thereby are hardened in sinne, and driuen off from repentance: euen as an old thiefe that hath stollen a long time, and escaped both prison and gallowes, is animated more boldly to proceed in his wickednes, thinking hee shall alwaies so escape: So many filthy and lose livers goe forward in their abhomination without repentance, thinking that because God doth not incontinently punish them, and shew some manifest iudgement and signe of his wrath vpon them, therefore they shall be acquitted for altogether. Whereas contrariwise, if God should by and by strike them downe as soone as they had sinned, by thundering upon one; and lightening upon another,

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and raining fire and brimstone vpon the third, it would make them afraid. Herupon it is said in 2 Pet. 3. 24. This first understanding, that there shall come in the last daies, mockers, which will walke after their lusts, and say: Where is the promise of his comming? For since the Fathers dyed, all things continue alike from the beginning of the Creation. But let these men well know, that when God hath delayed a long time, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, at length hée will shew, that although hée waited for their repentance, yet hée forgot not their misdéeds, but registred them before him, and packed them vp vpon a great heape, to increase the terrour of his wrath.

The sixth hinderance is, The beholding of other mens ends: for when some men that haue liued a wicked and ungracious life, and haue béene notorious sinners, euen to the worldward, so that euery man could point at them, yet if vpon their death-bed they can say a few good words, and cry God mercy, and say their prayers, and forgiue all the world, and so die quietly, it is maruellous to heare how foolish people of the world will exalt them, and iustifie them, saying, He made a very good end, as any man could make, hee died as quiet as a Lambe, and set all things in good order before hée dyed. Hereupon another wicked and monstrous

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varlet is incouraged to sin. For thinketh he, such a man liued as lowsely as I, or any man else, and yet hée made a very good end, and why may not I doe so too? But alas, these mens eyes are bleared; for to die quietly, is not to die godly: to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to haue God mercifull; to say a few Prayers from the téeth outward, is not to die in the faith of Christ: for many doe all these, and yet die miserably.

The last let is, Hope of long life: for while men feede and beſot themselues in this hope, they are drunken in sinne, and defer the day of Repentance, as the rich man in the 12. of Luke, dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought of God, and the other life, and of Christs comming, and of all good things, and said within himselfe: Soule, thou hast much goods laid up for many yeeeres, live at ease, eate, drinke and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of this world, choake vp repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore my deare brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God, in the bowells of Christ Jesus, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and vnfeigned repentance, but that you may ouer-slide them all: lest haply you being found without repentance, and taken tarey in your sinnes, should all perish, and be damned, according to Christs sentence.

sentence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with godly Ezechias bee afraid of Gods threatnings, sorrow aforehand, stand in aw of God, examine our consciences, mourne for our sinnes, and lament inwardly, that when the wicked, who haue swimmed in pleasure here below shall enter into their eternall paines, wee may then, I say, there haue eternall peace and rest: that when Iesus Christ shall appeare from Heaven with all his Angels, we may haue crownes of glory, and raigne with our God and our Sauiour his Son, and all his Saints and Angels, in the midst of all ioy, in the Heauens for euermore. To the which ioy he bring us all, which hath so dearely bought us, Iesus Christ the righteous. To whom with the Father and the holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, praise, power, and dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.

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